

“Contemporary”

Moral

Problems

IT-ETHIC

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Contemporary Moral Problems

Chapter 1: James Rachels: Egoism and Moral Skepticism

Amazon Reference: <http://www.amazon.com/Contemporary-Moral-Problems-James-White/dp/0534517242>

Quote: “The object of our attitude is the attainment of that goal and we must want to attain the goal before we can find any satisfaction in it.”

What I expect to learn:

I expect to learn the relevance of egoism and moral scepticism.

Review:

Egoism and Moral Scepticism are two things which I still do not know if they are the same or not. That is why I want to know its relevance with each other or if it is different at all. First thing to tackle is egoism which is likewise a word we people don't usually hear in our everyday lives. Reading through several articles and stuffs, I was able to know that these two are also called psychological egoism and ethical egoism. Knowing this, I started thinking that it has relevance with each other. Psychological egoism talks about different people who never act unselfishly. I believe that this is something against my opinion. For me, people know how to act unselfishly because they also do things which are something they won't even benefit with. Not all people acts upon a thing because there is always something in return because not all are selfish. So I believe that psychological egoism is not fully correct because it still depends on the person.

Ethical egoism, based from what I have understand tells that people knows how to act unselfishly. I believe that this is true. People know how to act morally one example is by just helping someone though it is not for their own sake. They still do it even though they know that there is nothing in return. It is not only that they want to act unselfishly; but also, it is in the nature of people to do things not just for their own good. As a whole, I now understand the relevance of the two.

What I learned:

- Relevance of egoism and moral scepticism.
- Psychological and ethical egoism.
- They are not fully different from each other.

Integrative Question:

- 1.) What is the relevance of egoism and moral scepticism?
- 2.) What are the 2 types of egoism?
- 3.) What is the definition of psychological egoism?
- 4.) What is the definition of ethical egoism?
- 5.) Are egoism and moral scepticism different?

Chapter 2: John Arthur: Religion, Morality and Conscience

Amazon Reference: <http://www.amazon.com/Contemporary-Moral-Problems-James-White/dp/0534517242>

Quote: “Human understanding is simply inadequate to this difficult and controversial task”

What I expect to learn:

I expect to learn the relevance of religion, morality, and conscience.

Review:

The religion, morality, and conscience are 3 different things but are all connected with each other. Being connected with each other makes it clearer to understand. For me, morality and conscience might not be present if not for religion. I think that religion is the very foundation of morality and conscience. Morality and conscience are two religious acts. It is not only an act but is like a belief which is an obligation for people to do. Morality and religion are both more of an obligation than conscience because not having conscience cannot be a reason for someone to be sued in jail. If we look to it and understand it based from the words of the bible, then we will understand it the way the bible taught us. Every people have their own religion and this teaches us things such as morality and conscience. Morality is a teaching also from our respective religions which we should always follow because a religion is like a contract and morality is under the terms of that contract. Lastly is conscience which I think is not something needed to be followed but it something wherein people should practice in their everyday lives. I have undergone my tests' of conscience and I think I had surpassed all of it. It is important to have a conscience but depending on the situation.

To sum this chapter up, I have learned that these three things are connected with each other and I also learned their individual meanings. They all have their lessons which they want people to exercise it and do their best to do it.

What I learned:

- The individual meaning of religion, morality, and conscience.
- The lessons these three wants to say to people.
- The relevance of religion, morality, and conscience.

Integrative Question:

- 1.) What is the relevance of religion, morality, and conscience?
- 2.) What is the definition of religion?
- 3.) What is the definition of morality?
- 4.) What is the definition of conscience?
- 5.) What are the lessons they want to say?

Chapter 3: Friedrich Nietzsche: Master and Slave Morality

Amazon Reference: <http://www.amazon.com/Contemporary-Moral-Problems-James-White/dp/0534517242>

Quote: “Life itself is essentially appropriation”

What I expect to learn:

I expect to learn the meaning of master and slave morality.

Review:

This is the very first time I ever heard of the statement master and slave morality. I think these are two different things which is also connected or related with each other. There is what we call master morality and the other one is slave morality. Master morality is somewhat sentiment while slave morality is re-sentiment which is the other way around. Another thing is that the master morality is on the strong side while the slave morality is on the weak side. Its relevance with each other is that in real life, the master is always the stronger ones and the slave which is the follower is the weak ones and should follow the commands of the master or there will be a punishment. It says that the essence of master morality is nobility and it is designed to protect the strong willed so meaning that nobility is for the protection of the strong willed. The slave morality which is mainly the slaves re-evaluates the values of their master. It is most likely in the real world that a slave follows the values of his/her master. Another thing about master morality is that they are doers of good deeds or they are called creators of morality. The slaves always respond to the morality of their master by doing what they know and apply the slave morality.

As a whole and to sum this chapter up, it is clearly explained that master and slave morality are two different things but still has relevance with each other and I think it is a tag team and one will not function correctly if the other one is not present.

What I learned:

- The relevance of master and slave morality.
- The meaning of master and slave morality.
- Master and slave morality are two different things which still have relevance with each other.

Integrative Question:

- 1.) What is the importance of master and slave morality?
- 2.) What is their individual importance to each other?
- 3.) What is the relevance of master and slave morality?
- 4.) How master and slave morality are connected with each other?
- 5.) What is the real message of this chapter?

Chapter 4: Trying Out One's New Sword

Amazon Reference: <http://www.amazon.com/Contemporary-Moral-Problems-James-White/dp/0534517242>

Quote: "Nobody can respect what is entirely unintelligible to them."

What I expect to learn:

I expect to learn the importance of cultures in the world.

Review:

Everyone in this world has their own respective cultures wherein they follow and normally live with. It can be compared to a person everyday routine but difference is that it is an aspect which is something more serious than that of a routine. Even I as a human being, have my own culture which I am used to already because from my very first day on earth, it is what my parents already allowed me to see and live with as I grew up. The culture every people woke up to is something they respect and keep on living with.

Now based on what Mary Midgley said on this chapter which is entitled, Trying Out One's New Sword, my understanding with it is that people tend to live or experience different cultures by just having companionship and experience with different kinds of people who have basically their own respective cultures. Trying out one's new sword for me is like a person being able to experience a different person's culture. For me, based on my own experience, people are not far from experiencing other people's culture. It is just a matter of choice if they are going to respect it or not. The culture of other people is something we are really not used to. That is why there is the word adaptation which allows us to adjust and understand more the certain culture of someone.

As a whole, people always have a choice whether to respect someone's culture or not. It is important for somebody to learn to adapt on a person's culture because though we have different kinds of culture, it is true that all of us are still living in one world.

What I learned:

- Importance of respect.
- Importance of culture.
- Relevance of respect to culture.

Integrative Question:

- 1.) What is the relevance of respect to culture?
- 2.) Why is respect important when it comes to culture?
- 3.) What is the main purpose of a culture?
- 4.) What is the meaning of adaptation?
- 5.) What is the importance of adaptation?

Chapter 5: John Stuart Mill: Utilitarianism

Amazon Reference: <http://www.amazon.com/Contemporary-Moral-Problems-James-White/dp/0534517242>

Quote: “Pleasure and freedom from pain are the only things desirable as ends.”

What I expect to learn:

I expect to learn the true meaning of the principle of utility.

Review:

The principle of utility based from what I have read is basically about happiness which every people wants in their lives. John Stuart Mill tries to explain his own opinion about the principle of utility and he's not going to stop defending his thoughts. There are many objections and conclusions about this principle which is basically called utilitarianism. The principle of utilitarianism is somewhat a word or a phrase which is basically new to me. It is something which I don't usually hear everyday. But I think, I can feel it everyday and it is a part of my emotion most of the time. Proving that the principle of utilitarianism is about the happiness of people, I can say that this principle is very important in the lives of people. People mostly feel in their everyday lives the happiness and pain due to the events and happenings they experienced.

Happiness and pain is basically a contradiction with each other. Of course, when happiness is present, then pain does not exist. But when pain is present, happiness are the ones that do not exist. Happiness brings pleasure to people. There are times that pain should be experienced first before happiness takes place. People desire pleasure or happiness which is basically a freedom from pain. Who does not want to be free of pain? People should learn how to live their lives and balance it.

As a whole, this chapter explains the importance of happiness and that the principle of utility/utilitarianism is about happiness and freedom from pain. Happiness is one aspect of morality and it is a very important aspect in the lives of people.

What I learned:

- The principle of utility as happiness.
- The things desirable as ends.
- The relevance of happiness and pain.

Integrative Question:

- 1.) What is the importance of happiness?
- 2.) What is the true meaning of pain?
- 3.) What are the things desirable as ends for people?
- 4.) How can someone be free of pain?
- 5.) Can people obtain happiness through pain?

Chapter 6: James Rachels: The Debate over Utilitarianism

Amazon Reference: <http://www.amazon.com/Contemporary-Moral-Problems-James-White/dp/0534517242>

Quote: “Is happiness the only thing that matters?”

What I expect to learn:

I expect to learn the story behind the debate over utilitarianism.

Review:

The debate over utilitarianism for me sounds like it is literally a debate composed of different sides or parties who are basically arguing about utilitarianism. They are arguing about utilitarianism and its aspects. If utilitarianism is happiness, then therefore, it is included in the question which I used as a chosen quote. It is being asked in the quoted statement if happiness or utilitarianism is the only thing that matters. Why or utilitarianism? It is because utilitarianism was discussed in the previous chapter and tells that it is happiness.

There are these two important questions that are both a big factor in utilitarianism. The questions are what things are good? And the other ones are what actions are right? I believe that these two questions are appropriate for this chapter. I also think that this will lessen the argument because question will be answered by these two main topics for happiness. I believe that good things are results of a persons good actions and it is also what is written in the chapter. In my own opinion, bad actions can never result to good things and I can prove this based from my own experience. It is just like answering a question without reading it first. This will surely result to a wrong answer which is not a good thing and it is due to a bad action.

To sum this chapter up, the debate over utilitarianism still ends that happiness is every ones desire but people does have their own ways on how to get responded and how to do their ways of happiness. It is important to do a right action to result a good thing such as happiness.

What I learned:

- The two questions which are important to utilitarianism.
- The way people wants to act and result to different things.
- The relevance of doing a good act and having a correct result.

Integrative Question:

- 1.) What is the importance of doing a right action?
- 2.) Is it happiness which really matters?
- 3.) How do people act for them to acquire happiness?
- 4.) Is it important to know what is right and wrong to have a correct result?
- 5.) Can a person be happy by doing the wrong things in life?

Chapter 7: The Categorical Imperative

Amazon Reference: <http://www.amazon.com/Contemporary-Moral-Problems-James-White/dp/0534517242>

Quote: “A good will is not good because of what it effects or accomplishes.”

What I expect to learn:

I expect to learn the true concept and meaning of a good will.

Review:

The categorical imperative is a concept written by Immanuel Kant who is one of the most important philosophers of all time. Come to think of it. What do you think is Immanuel’s good will in writing this concept? Well I think, he wrote this concept just to clear out the meaning of a good will. Based from what I have read. The good will is something which is done intentionally or without anything in exchange at all. It also says that the good will is the same with the gifts of fortune. Literally speaking, a good will is something done by someone with good intentions of doing it or maybe just with good intentions. There is another one which is called, the good will and its results. Based from the quoted statement at the top, I believe that it is true. “A good will is not good because of what it affects or accomplishes.” It is good without any reason but is in itself. A good will’s result is something which is good in it and not because of its accountability of accomplishing the ends. It is willingly good alone. Next is the good will and duty. This one basically tells the worth and conditions of our actions. A good will can be a duty if we make it one. Lastly is the motive of duty. This one basically tells that every duty has its own respective motive. Not a thing in this world exists without a motive.

To sum it up, the categorical imperative explains the good will and its branches and the thoughts it wants to deliver to the people.

What I learned:

- The meaning of good will.
- The message of The Categorical Imperative
- That the good will is good in it self.

Integrative Question:

- 1.) What is the message of The Categorical Imperative?
- 2.) What is true concept of a good will?
- 3.) What are the branches of a good will?
- 4.) How can a good will be delivered by someone?
- 5.) What is the importance of a good will?

Chapter 8: Happiness and Virtue

Amazon Reference: <http://www.amazon.com/Contemporary-Moral-Problems-James-White/dp/0534517242>

Quote: “For one swallow; does not make a summer, nor does one day; and so too one day, or a short time, does not make a man blessed and happy”

What I expect to learn:

I expect to learn the relevance of virtue and happiness.

Review:

I think happiness and virtue are two things that have something in common or something in relevance. Happiness and virtue is a concept written by Aristotle to define both sides and explain how one affects the other and vice-versa. How can a person have his/her own happiness in life? Based from my own experience, I want many things in life. Think those things are my own reason to become happy. The virtues in life are things which are done by people. Everyone in this world have their own virtues to follow. While reading through the text of Aristotle, I found out that virtues are like the path way to happiness. I believe that this is true. I also read a part of the text wherein it is important to know how to be balance and moderate in living our lives. I think it tells that things cannot be earned in a rush or just a flick of an eye. Things are acquired by a process. How long is this process? It depends on how the person does his/her virtues or how fast he/she walks on the pathway to be able to have the happiness. For me, one good example is that I want many things in life for me to have my happiness. I want them and I know that I can have them one step at a time. I am a student right now and all I need to do first is to graduate before I exist in the real world. I think that when I graduate, it is the start and the only way for me to have my bunch of happiness. I want to explore things which are basically new to me.

Right now, I am happy with what I have and who I am. I believe that doing my virtues in a correct manner can lead me to the happiness that I am aiming for.

What I learned:

- Relevance of virtues and happiness.
- Importance of doing the right things to have happiness.
- Learn that happiness can't exist without virtues.

Integrative Question:

- 1.) What is the relevance virtue and happiness?
- 2.) How long is the process to have complete happiness?
- 3.) How can a virtue lead to happiness?
- 4.) How important are virtues in people's lives?
- 5.) How important is happiness in our lives?

Chapter 9: The Nature and Value of Rights

Amazon Reference: <http://www.amazon.com/Contemporary-Moral-Problems-James-White/dp/0534517242>

Quote: “World without rights.”

What I expect to learn:

I expect to learn the message of nature and value of rights.

Review:

The nature and value of rights is a concept written by Joel Feinberg who wants to demonstrate that rights are morally important. Joel Feinberg is a professor of philosophy at the University of Arizona. Feinberg wants to clear the importance of rights to people. What is a right? For me, a right is like a power or being free. In our country, we have the rights to decide for ourselves and we have a free will to do anything we want that will not exceed to the limits of the law. This is the life I am fond of and I am used living in a place like this. It is a very good thing having free will and rights to decide for myself. But Feinberg imagines that Nowheresville can be a world which is like ours. Nowheresville is a place wherein people have no rights at all. Isn't that a hard thing to live with? I think if I would live in a place like that which I am not used to, I think I can't stay long living there. For me, having rights is exactly a basically a right for everyone. No one has the power to dictate a person's life and limitations. I know there is a law to follow but that is something which is just. But not having a right is very unfair to those people. It is like living in a parliament country. For me, only God has the power to give or remove our rights on every aspect. He is the one who gave, so basically he can only be the one who can take it from us. This also follows the context of rights that a creditor has the right to demand the debtor to pay his debts.

To sum it up, right is a very important thing in the lives of people and no one has the power to remove the rights of people except from God.

What I learned:

- The nature and value of rights.
- Importance of rights to people.
- The definition of rights.

Integrative Question:

- 1.) What is the importance of rights to our lives?
- 2.) Why are some ones right important?
- 3.) What is the main purpose of a person's right?
- 4.) Who has the power to give and take away rights from everyone?
- 5.) What can Nowheresville look like if people there have rights?

Chapter 10: Taking Rights Seriously

Amazon Reference: <http://www.amazon.com/Contemporary-Moral-Problems-James-White/dp/0534517242>

Quote: “The concept of rights has its most natural use when a political society is divided, and appeals to co-operation or a common goal are pointless.”

What I expect to learn:

I expect to learn the importance of rights.

Review:

Taking rights seriously of the Contemporary Moral Problems is written by Ronald Dworkin who is a professor of Oxford University and New York University. First of all, what is a right? Rights have been discussed in the previous chapter which is The Nature and Value of Rights. As we all know, all the people in this world has their own rights which we need to respect. Ronald Dworkin tackled the issue about rights wherein the United States is involved. He is asking if the United States does give importance to the moral and political rights of their people. The government of the United States also has their own foreign and race policy which I think is also an issue nowadays. Why is it important to know the rights of people? For me, our rights are important because it is our own privilege. I think it is the only thing we can really called ours literally. Only God has the power to give and take our rights from us. But in real life, the government is being abusive of their power and does not think of the rights of the people. They don't mind of whatever people will say about them as long as they benefit from what they are doing. I can tell that they are unfair and are very abusive.

The people of each administration should be given fair or equal treatment because they are their own people. The government should be able to manage them well and I think that treating them equally is one simple way of for them to manage them well easily.

What I learned:

- The importance of rights.
- The way the government treats people unjustly.

Integrative Question:

- 1.) What is the importance of rights?
- 2.) What is a moral right?
- 3.) What is a political right?
- 4.) Is the concept of right pointless?
- 5.) How can the concept of rights avoid being pointless?

Chapter 11: A Theory of Justice

Amazon Reference: <http://www.amazon.com/Contemporary-Moral-Problems-James-White/dp/0534517242>

Quote: “The principles of justice are chosen behind a veil of ignorance.”

What I expect to learn:

I expect to learn the importance of justice in our lives.

Review:

A theory of Justice of the Moral Contemporary Problems is written by John Rawls. This chapter tackles the theory and main idea of justice itself. John Rawls wants to show his conception of justice. As discussed in this chapter, justice is a very important thing in our lives. Justice is something which should always be present most especially for those being treated unjustly. Here in our country Philippines, I can say that justice is being implemented but not to the best extent of it. There are still issues of unjust treatment here in our country and I believe that this happens because of those who are abusive of their power and also because of those who are wealthy enough to spend money just to be free of any judicial acts. Sometimes, those who does not have any obligation at all on a certain thing, suddenly becomes an obligee because of the other parties involved who are wealthy enough. The point here is that when you are wealthy and powerful enough, you can abuse it and make other people suffer on the consequences which are originally designed for you. Here exists the thing we call bribery. The government personnel who accept bribery are those also who does not care about justice. It is like laughing on a certain situation because you are not involved but wait until it happens to you. For me, it is an exact example of unequal treatment of justice to people.

To sum this chapter up, justice is really an important thing to people lives. We should learn how to fight for our own justice most especially in times wherein we are the one involved and we know that we should be not.

What I learned:

- The importance of justice to people.
- A certain administration needs justice and equality.

Integrative Question:

- 1.) What is the importance of equality?
- 2.) How can a person learn to fight for their own justice?
- 3.) Why should the government exercise equal treatment?
- 4.) How important is justice in people's lives?
- 5.) What is the message of this chapter?

Chapter 12: The Need for More than Justice

Amazon Reference: <http://www.amazon.com/Contemporary-Moral-Problems-James-White/dp/0534517242>

Quote: “For “care” is the new buzz word.”

What I expect to learn:

I expect to learn the message this chapter.

Review:

This chapter was written by Annette Baier who is a teacher of Philosophy at the University of Pittsburgh. This chapter is yet another study about justice once again. First of all, what is justice again? Justice is the quality of being righteous or fair. Many philosophers, theologians and others define justice as the proper ordering of people and things. Behind the concept of justice lies the notion of balance--that people get what is right, fair and appropriate. Justice also includes the notion of upholding the law, as in the work of police, judges and the court. I believe that this definition of justice is true and has something in connection with this chapter. It tells that justice is the concept of notion of balance. For me, notion of balance is basically like equality. Balance is to be exercised most especially by our leaders because it is the easiest way of treating their people and managing them well. Based from the definition too of justice, it tells that this is the proper ordering of people and things. So basically, in order to have peace and harmony in our places, leaders should learn how to be equal and throw justice fairly. Examples are in court trials. Judges should be balance in deciding and no biases are accepted. No status in life should also be involved because equality is what we are talking about.

As a summary of this chapter, the need for more justice talks about justice which brings order to our places and to us people.

Source: <http://www.yourdictionary.com/dictionary-articles/Definition-of-Justice.html>

What I learned:

I learned the meaning and importance of justice and its relevance to order.

Integrative Question:

- 1.) What is the message of this chapter?
- 2.) What is the definition of justice?
- 3.) What is the importance of justice in our world?
- 4.) What is the relevance of justice to order?
- 5.) How can our leaders practice justice?